

# THE Christian History;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival  
of Religion in *Great Britain, America, &c.*

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Saturday JANUARY 5. 1744. § N<sup>o</sup>. 97.  
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*An Account of the late Revival of Religion at Taunton;  
finished.*

**S**OMETIMES, as before observ'd, they are comforted and refreshed by renewed Discoveries of *the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus*.---Then how do they bless his holy Name which is infinitely exalted above all Blessing and Praise ! How feelingly and delightfully do they tell of the Wonders of his Love to such unworthy Creatures as they are ! How do they speak of the Glories of Free-Grace, of the Way of Salvation by Christ, of the Pleasures of Religion ! How feelingly do they appear to loth and abhor themselves, repenting in Dust and Ashes ;---to long to live always thus near to God ; to be freed from Sin in Heart and Life ; to fear a resting in their Frames, in themselves, or any Thing short of Christ ; and to labour to *grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour*.

Some indeed appear to have more clear and frequent Discoveries of the Glory of the Lord, and make swifter Advances in the divine Life ; living nearer to God, exercising more Tendernefs Watchfulness & Circumspection in their Christian Walk than others ; and grow more in a *doctrinal and experimental* Acquaintance with God and Christ, and the New-Covenant Way of Salvation, and with the Deceitfulness and desperate Wickedness of their own Hearts.

But God seems to be leading most or all of them into the Wilderness ; to humble and prove them, that they may see more of their Hearts, and may be taught to live more by Faith and less by Sense.

Tho' indeed as I before intimated, the *wise* Virgins are too much slumbring with the *Foolish*; but some seem to have a greater Sense of it than others, and mourn more under it and after Deliverance from it.

And tho' *many*, as I have said before, who were *awakened*, have *fallen away* to their former *Security*; yet what Wonder is it? Is it any Thing new? Or what might not have been expected? Is this therefore a Reason for concluding, that either *those* were not under scriptural *Convictions*, or that *others* have not been *converted*?

And tho' further, a *few* that received *Joy* and *Comfort*, give awful Proof that they never experienced a saving *Change*; and even some that made a public Profession of Christ, give awful Grounds to fear lest they are Strangers to him; yet are these Things so strange and unheard of, as to give Warrant to conclude that none of them are any better? There are, and have ever been *Hypocrites*, and Stony-ground Hearers in the Church; and shall we act agreeable to Scripture or Reason if we say that therefore none are *sincere*? Indeed there is abundant Reason to bless God, that *so few* of the professed Subjects of this Work appear to *apostatize* in Proportion to the *great Numbers* who give all the Evidences of a supernatural and abiding *Change* that we can reasonably expect.

And tho' *two*, as I remember, for a few Hours whilst under *Convictions* of Sin and *Wrath*, were so over-power'd as to lose the free Exercise of Reason; yet is this so anti-scriptural as to warrant us to conclude the Persons were not under the *Convictions* of the *Holy Spirit*, tho' *distracted by divine Terrors*, as *Heman* was?

And tho' I believe, some have been tinctured with *Enthusiasm*, which I believe they are come or coming off from, as they grow more experienced; yet is it at all wonderful that true Christians should be thus tinctured; when we consider the remaining *Darkness* of their Understandings, the *Malice* and *Subtlety* of Satan, with our natural *Proneness* to run from one Extream to another?

As to what has been reported of the Subjects of this Work, that they *Neglect their secular Business* by going to so many Meetings; --- I would say, it has not been so with us; but they have generally, and I know not but universally, worked as much or more than ever, and with more *Cheerfulness* and *Delight*, and I trust some of them from Gospel Principles.

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They have indeed been more conversant in the Duties of Religion ; but they have *redeemed their Time* for these Purposes from *Idleness, Tavern-baunting, Frolicks, merry Meetings, and vain Conversation* : and where is the Harm of this to the Church or Common-Wealth ? Indeed some whilst under *great Convictions* or *strong Consolation* might, & I believe did, in some Measure neglect their Business : But what Wonder of this ?

I would observe here, that for all the Cry there may have been about *so many Meetings* of late Years, as if such and such *Places* or *Persons* would be undone ; God has been pleased to load us abundantly with his Benefits, to give as great or *greater Plenty* of Provision these few Years past than ever.

As for what is reported about *Divisions* being occasioned by *this Work* ; I would say,---It has been I believe the *accidental Cause* thereof, which I think is no just Ground of Prejudice against it. It cannot be expected that the Power of Godliness should flourish in such a Degree as it has done, and not be opposed by the *Devil* and the *Lusts of Men*. But the *Doctrines* insisted on and blessed here in carrying on this Work, have no other than an *accidental Tendency* to create Divisions ; as you may see in the Account of them I have given you ; and the *Subjects* of the Work and such as appear *friendly* to it are united by these Things.

To sum up all in a Word---There are *many Things* reported of the *Subjects* of this Work, about their *Imprudencies, Irregularities, &c.* some of which are *false or gross Misrepresentations*, or charging those Things upon all which *some pretended ones* are guilty of ; or may I think be accounted for by considering either that many appear *friendly* to this Work who are *unconverted*, or that those who are *converted*, are in a *State of Imperfection*.

But if Persons will receive none as Christians or as under a divine Influence except such as they can see no Fault in,---where will they find any Christians in their Esteem then upon Earth.

And now, if after the Account I have endeavoured to give of the Revival and Progress of a Work of God among this People in the late Day of his great Grace, any reject it for a wild Scene of Enthusiasm ; give me Leave to ask, \* What *true Religion* is, and where we shall find it ? If true Religion is not to be found in *these Things*, where shall we find any Religion save the *Religion of Nature* ? I freely confess,

for my own Part, that if these Things are not true Religion, I know not what it is either in *Theory* or by *Experience*. But who is the *Author* of these Things, and what are their *Tendency*? Is it not evident that they are from God and lead directly to God? Who is he that opens the Eyes of blind Sinners to see their Sin and Misery by Nature? Who awakens those who were at ease in *Zion*, making them earnestly solicitous to be brought out of the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son? Who discovers to Men the *Secrets* of their *Hearts* exactly answering to what is written in God's *Word* concerning them; humbles them at the Feet of divine Sovereignty, and brings them to submit to the Righteousness of God; opens their Eyes to see the Glory, All-sufficiency, Suitableness and Willingness of the dear Redeemer to save even the chief of Sinners who come unto God by him; giving them a spiritual View of these great Truths according to the *Scripture*, effectually persuading and enabling them to receive him and rest upon him and him alone for Salvation according to the Gospel? Who makes Sinners see and feel their spiritual Poverty, and mourn under it and vehemently and insatiably hunger and thirst after Christ and his Righteousness, esteeming him as the chiefest among ten Thousand, as One altogether lovely, &c. Who opens the Eyes of Sinners to see the odious Nature and Deserts of Sin, and the real Beauty of Holiness, and makes them prize and long and seek after Christ's whole Salvation? Who makes them complain of indwelling Sin as their greatest Burden, and long for perfect Deliverance therefrom, for Purity of Heart and Life? Who changes their Tempers, so that they come to love and relish those Things which once they hated and disrelished, and so *à contrâ*? Who makes them leave off their former sinful Ways, and change their vain Companions for the Company of those who are most serious and spiritual; makes them delight in and attend diligently and seriously upon Ordinances, and yet mourn if they only meet with empty Ordinances, &c. Who is the *Author* of these Things? But the eternal, sovereign and almighty Spirit of Grace? For which forever adored be his holy Name.

And what is the natural *Tendency* of these Things but to make Men *holy*, *perfect* and *happy*, according to the Account given us of the Recovery of fallen Man in the Gospel? If these Things are only the Effects of an overheated Imagination,

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how shall I be certain of the Reality of any Thing, that I love any Person, or delight in any Thing, &c. But I forbear--- only I would say to those who cavil at or reject these Things as the Work of *Satan*, idle Dreams or *Imagination*, &c. *come taste and see*: candidly and impartially examine and let *Scripture* be Judge.---It seems if they would do thus, their Minds would be changed.---But perhaps some will say that these Things which you have given us an Account of and call a Work of God are right and scriptural.---You have nothing against these Things.

Well, I have endeavoured to write the Truth.---I have conversed with the Subjects of this Work, and am bound in Charity to believe what they say they have been convinced of, &c. upon which their Lives were changed, &c. which Things I have endeavoured to give you an Account of.

My Prayer to God has been that I might do it with Uprightness and Sincerity as in his Sight, and I hope I have had in some Measure his gracious Assistance. May God accept of it as a Testimony for him, and accompany it with his Blessing, mercifully forgiing me all my Infirmities which I have been guilty of in writing it, for his Names Sake !

And thus desiring your Prayers for me that I may make full Proof of my Ministry, &c. for my Charge, that God would graciously revive and carry on his own Work here more gloriously.---that he would plead his own Cause and Work when Men make void his Law.---I subscribe my self your younger and unworthy Fellow-Labourer in the Gospel of the dearest Jesus,

*Josiah Crocker.*

P. S. I have been in some Measure acquainted with the late Revival of Religion in many other Places, as in *Middleborough* both Parishes, in *Plimouth*, some of the Parishes in *Bridgewater*, *Raynham*, *Berkeley*, *Norton*, *Attleborough*, *Martha's-Vineyard*, and other Places. And as far as I am capable of judging, the divine Influence is the true Spring thereof, and the Revival appears to be the same for Substance in every of these Places.---They appear to have the same Grounds of Distress and Joy, &c. the same After-Complaints and Delights, evidencing, that it is the same Omnipresent sovereign and eternal Spirit of Grace, who is the Author of these Things, who gives forth his Influences to what



what Person or People, and whensoever he will and none may stay his almighty Hand, or say unto him what dost thou, or why dost thou thus. The same Spirit our Fore-Fathers and we have been praying for, &c. tho' it may be some of us knew not what we did.---As the personal Coming of the *Messias* in the Flesh, &c. which the *Jews* had been praying and waiting for, was not according to the Expectations of the carnal *Jews*, yea, his own Disciples laboured under much Ignorance, and had many gross Apprehensions of his Person Manner of Coming, Kingdom, &c. May we not therefore justly expect that Christ's coming to his People according to his Promise by his Spirit, tho' they have been praying for it, should be mistaken by many of his professed People. *Job. 1. 12.* We are so prone to limit the holy One of *Israel*, thro' our natural Ignorance, Pride, &c. that we are for rejecting him when he comes not to us and works not according to that Plan we have laid out in our own Minds for him to work by, &c. O let us judge of God and his Works by Faith, according to the Scriptures.

Yours, &c.

J. Crocker.

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*As we are about to give the Public some Account of the late extraordinary Work of God in this Metropolis of NEW-ENGLAND; we think it convenient to insert previously some Accounts of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, an eminent Instrument thereof; as they successively arrived before his Appearance here, and which prepar'd the Way for his Entertainment and successful Labours among us.*

**I**T was in the Year 1738, we were first surpriz'd with the News of Mr. *Whitefield* as a young Minister of the Church of England of flaming Piety, and Zeal for the Power of Godliness: Who this Year sail'd from London to Gibraltar and Georgia †; being appointed Minister of *Frederica* in that Province, and after a few Months Stay returned thro' Ireland to England for Priests Orders, || being ordained only a Deacon before.

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† His two first Journals. || Letter to the Prebendary of St. Pauls.

The Year following we were yet more surpriz'd to hear of his Preaching the *Doctrines* of the *Martyrs* and *other Reformers*, which were the same our *Fore-Fathers* brought over hither : Particularly the great *Doctrines* of *Original Sin*, of *Regeneration by the DIVINE SPIRIT*, *Justification by Faith only*, &c. and this with amazing *Affiduity Power* and *Success* : which extraordinary Appearance, especially in the *Church of England*, together with the vast *Multitudes* of *People* that flock'd to hear him, drew our *Attention* to every *Thing* that was published concerning him.

The latter End of this Year he left *England*, being presented by the *Honourable Trustees* of *Georgia* to the *Living* at *Savanna* : and arrived at *Philadelphia* the second of *November*, preached there on *Lord's-Day* and every *Day* in the *Week* after. *November* 8th, began to preach from the *Court-House Gallery* about six at *Night* to near six *Thousand People*, who stood in awful *Silence* to hear him ; and so every *Night* 'till *Lord's-Day Evening*. *November* 12th, He set out for *New-York* : Where he arrived two *Days* after, and there also preach'd with great *Power* and *Efficacy*.† An *Account* of which, with some more particular *Description* of his *Person* and *Doctrines*, were drawn up by an ingenious *Gentleman*, and publish'd in the *New-England Journal* ||, from which we select the following *Passages* :

THE Rev. Mr. *Whitefield* arrived at the *City* of *New-York* on *Wednesday* the 14th *Instant*, a little before *Night*. The next *Day* in the *Afternoon* he preached in the *Fields* to many *Hundreds* of *People*.

Among the *Hearers*, the *Person* who gives this *Account*, was one. I fear *Curiosity* was the *Motive* that led me and many others into that *Assembly*. I had read two or three of Mr. *Whitefield's* *Sermons* and *Part* of his *Journal*, and from thence had obtained a settled *Opinion*, that he was a good *Man*. Thus far was I prejudiced in his *Favour*. But then having heard of much *Opposition*, and many *Clamours* against him, I tho't it possible that he might have carried *Matters* too far.---That some *Enthusiasm* might have mix'd itself with his *Piety*, and that his *Zeal* might have exceeded

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† Several *New-England Journals*. || No. 659.

his Knowledge.----With these Prepossession I went into the Fields ; when I came there, I saw a great Number of People, consisting of *Christians* of all Denominations, some *Jews*, and a few, I believe, that had *no Religion* at all. When Mr. *Whitefield* came to the Place before designed, which was a little Eminence on the side of a Hill, he stood still & beckned with his Hand, and dispos'd the Multitude upon the Descent, before, and on each side of him. He then *prayed most excellently*, in the same Manner (I guess) that the first Ministers of the *Christian Church* prayed, before they were shackled with Forms. The Assembly soon appeared to be divided into two Companies, the one of which I considered under the Name of *GOD's Church*, and the other the *Devil's Chappel*. The *first* were collected round the Minister, and were very serious and attentive. The *last* had placed themselves in the Skirts of the Assembly, and spent most of their Time in giggling, scoffing, talking and laughing. I believe the Minister saw them, for in his Sermon, observing the Cowardice and Shamefacedness of *Christians* in Christ's Cause, he pointed towards *this* Assembly, and reproached the *former* with the Boldness and Zeal with which the Devil's Vassals serve him. Towards the last Prayer, the whole Assembly appeared more united, and all became hush'd and still ; a solemn Awe and Reverence appeared in the Faces of most, a mighty Energy attended the Word. I heard and felt something astonishing and surprizing, but, I confess, I was not at that Time fully rid of my Scruples. But as I tho't I saw a visible Presence of GOD with Mr. *Whitefield*, I kept my Doubts to my self.

Under this Frame of Mind, I went to hear him in the *Evening* at the *Presbyterian Church*, where he expounded to above *two Thousand* People within & without Doors. I never in my Life, saw so attentive an Audience : Mr. *Whitefield* spake as one having Authority : All he said was *Demonstration, Life and Power* ! The Peoples Eyes and Ears hung on his Lips. They greedily devour'd every Word. I came Home astonished ! Every Scruple vanished ; I never saw nor heard the like ; and I said within my self, *Surely God is with this Man of a Truth*. He preach'd and expounded in this Manner twice every Day for four Days, and his *Evening Assemblies* were continually increasing.

(To be continued.)